

FLIGHT JACKET

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

May 28, 2004

President outlines five steps for Iraq

Story by Kathleen T. Rhem

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush outlined five steps Monday that will help Iraq move toward democracy and security. He also laid out a proposal to demolish the notorious Abu Ghraib prison.

Bush delivered his remarks in a televised address from the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pa., the Army's senior service school to train leaders in developing and employing landpower. He said that after June 30 Iraqis will know Americans have no interest in continued occupation of Iraq.

"The rise of a free and self-governing Iraq will deny terrorists a base of operation, discredit their narrow ideology and give momentum to reformers across the region," he said. Success in Iraq will be a "decisive blow to terrorism at the heart of its power and a victory for the security of America and the civilized world."

Bush said U.N. special envoy Lakhdar Brahimi intends to name the interim-government officials this week.

"On June 30, the Coalition Provisional Authority will cease to exist and will not be replaced," Bush said. "The occupation will end, and Iraqis will govern their own affairs."

He shared several details of the future government.

See **PRESIDENT**, page 2



A valiant pull for victory

Lance Cpl. Ryan Bogan from Phoenix, an electronic counter-measures technician with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16, pulls for victory during a Tug-o-War competition May 20. This event, along with Rock Wall Climbing, Four-man Push Ups and a Cadence competition, were part of the 2004 Health Fair festivities.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen

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Miramar enjoys lower, yet climbing prices

Driver's to pay more for less gas during upcoming holiday weekend

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

If Miramar Marines and Sailors have noticed an increase in gasoline prices, at least they have a cheaper, more convenient option at the pump.

The upcoming Memorial Day holiday is one of the biggest driving vacation weekends, and the cost at the pump is starting to crunch many San Diego servicemembers' wallets.

With crude oil prices hitting more than \$40 per barrel and the national average for a gallon of unleaded gasoline climbing to more than \$2 per gallon, some of the nation's highest prices are on the West Coast, according to www.energy.gov.

"The cost to fill up my car has gone up

a lot in the past month or so," said Pfc. Achilles Cook, seat mechanic, Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101. "It is definitely not a buyer's market, but at least it is cheaper to get gas on base than out in town. The bottom line is people drive and need gas so even if gas is getting more expensive they will pay for it."

According to abcnews.com, gas prices have increased due to three factors: rising seasonal demand during the warmer month, an increased demand for oil across the nation due to strong economic health and some oil refineries going off-line as they gear up to meet a June 1 deadline to reformulate gasoline to help reduce summer smog.

Although the wait at the station's pumps can be longer at certain times of the day,

Miramar servicemembers like Cook do not see it as a problem.

"If you find the right time to go to the pump you can avoid a wait, but even during peak hours it is well worth the wait just to save money," said the New York native.

Servicing Miramar's more than 12,000 Marines, Sailors, Department of Defense employees and their families, as well as retirees, the station's two gas stations supplied more than 1.15 million gallons in both March and April, and to date for May nearly one million, said Larry Pirano, manager, Miramar Auto Service Center.

"By the time May is over, we will likely have sold more gas than in April," said Pirano. "Traditionally we are 10 to 15 cents

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Inside

Weekend forecast from Miramar's weather station



72°/59°
Today



73°/58°
Saturday



79°/60°
Sunday

**3rd MAW
flight
surgeons
receive
accolades**



**Air station
supports
Corps'
recruiting
efforts**



PRESIDENT,
continued from page 1

A president, two vice presidents and a prime minister will be appointed, along with 26 ministers to “oversee government departments from health to justice to defense.”

Bush said transferring authority to a sovereign Iraqi government will give Iraqis more interest in the country’s success and well-being.

“Iraqis will know that when they build a school or repair a bridge, they’re working not for the Coalition Provisional Authority, they’re working for themselves,” Bush said. “And when they patrol the streets of Baghdad or engage radical militias, they will be fighting for their own country.”

Regarding the second step, to assist in establishing security, the United States will provide forces and support as necessary, he said.

Coalition officials are also taking several steps to improve the quality and performance of Iraqi forces.

The steps include intensifying and lengthening training, improving vetoing procedures for leaders, and installing an Iraqi chain of command.

The plan’s third step is to continue rebuilding Iraq’s infrastructure “so that a free Iraq can quickly gain economic independence and a better quality of life,” Bush said.

Infrastructure also includes a well-supervised prison system. The president noted Abu Ghraib prison was a symbol of death and torture under Saddam Hussein.

It has since become “a symbol of disgraceful conduct by a few American troops who dishonored our country and disregarded our values,” he said.

He outlined plans for a modern maximum-security prison. When this is completed, Bush said, and with the approval of the sovereign Iraqi government, “we will demolish the Abu Ghraib prison as a fitting symbol of Iraq’s new beginning.”

Coalition forces and officials have already helped Iraqis rebuild schools, hospitals, electrical stations and bridges and modernize the country’s communications system, all of which were in shambles after armed conflict and decades of neglect by Saddam Hussein’s regime.

To ensure continued progress, the American embassy in Iraq will have regional offices in key cities to work closely with Iraqi government at all levels.

The fourth step is to enlist more international support for Iraq’s transition to democracy. U.S. and British representatives today proposed a new U.N. Security Council resolution “to reaffirm the world’s security commitment to the Iraqi people and to encourage other U.N. members to join in the effort,” Bush said.



President George W. Bush delivers remarks on Iraq and the war on terror at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pa., May 24. During his speech, the president outlined five steps he will use to help Iraq achieve freedom and democracy. Photo by Eric Draper

The president called the fifth step “the most important step” – free national elections to be held by January 2005.

“Iraqis are united in a broad and deep conviction,” Bush said. “They’re determined never again to live at the mercy of a dictator.

“And they believe that a national election will put that dark time behind them,” he continued. “A representative government that protects basic rights, elected by Iraqis, is the best defense against the return of tyranny.”

Bush admitted completing these five steps won’t be easy and there’s likely to be more violence before and after the June 30 transfer of authority.

“The terrorists and Saddam loyalists would rather see many Iraqis die than have any live in freedom,” he said. “But terrorists will not determine the future of Iraq.”

Bush said he sent American troops to Iraq “to make its people free, not to make them American.

“Iraqis will write their own history and find their own way,” he said.

“And as they do, Iraqis can be certain a free Iraq will always have a friend in the United States of America.”

The five-step plan

to achieve freedom and democracy in Iraq

- ♦ **Handing over authority to a sovereign Iraqi government;**
- ♦ **Helping establish security and improve quality and performance of Iraqi forces;**
- ♦ **Continuing to rebuild Iraq’s infrastructure so they may gain economic independence;**
- ♦ **Encouraging more international support and “reaffirm the world’s security commitment to the Iraqis;**
- ♦ **Moving toward a national election “that will bring forward new leaders empowered by the Iraqi people.”**

Don’t shake your baby

May marks Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention month

Story by Deanna Angel

New Parent Support Program

No one ever wakes up in the morning and decides that they are going to shake a baby. It just happens many times when parents or caregivers feel overwhelmed or frustrated. It occurs most when a baby is crying and the parent or caregiver just wants the baby to stop crying. Out of frustration or anger the baby is picked up and is shaken back and forth with force.

Why does this have the potential to hurt or kill a baby? Because the baby’s brain is not attached securely to the skull and when the head goes back and forth it can bruise the baby’s sensitive brain tissue and damage blood vessels. Bruised tissue can seriously injure a baby’s eyesight, cause learning disabilities, physical disabilities and even death. A moment of frustration can have implications that last a lifetime

How can Shaken Baby Syndrome be prevented? If you feel yourself getting frustrated because the baby won’t stop crying, then take a

See **SHAKE**, page 8

MIRAMARKS

“How do you feel about handing over authority to a sovereign Iraqi government?”



LANCE CPL. JASON CRUZ

Ground Support Equipment
Representative
HHM-165

“It is good to spread democracy, it will really help out the Iraqi people and their economy.”

PFC. TYRELL WHIPPLE

Flightline Mechanic
HMH-165

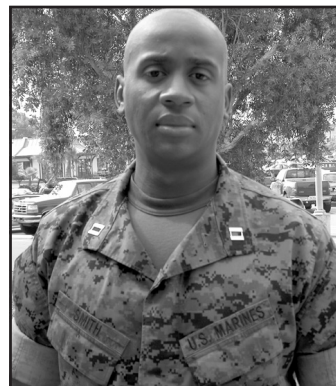
“It is good that they are trying to lead themselves, but they are really going to have to come together as a country for it to work.”



CAPT. ERIC SMITH

Officer In Charge
MASS-6 Det. A

“It is great. Having a democratic government in Iraq will really stabilize it and will hopefully spread to other countries in that region.”



FLIGHT JACKET

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Forward Deployed

3rd MAW flight surgeons receive accolades

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Two 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing flight surgeons recently won high honors for their outstanding service in helping their fellow Marines and Sailors.

Their superior and advanced abilities and experiences helped them surpass their peers with exceptional accomplishments.

In a formal ceremony held May 4 in Anchorage, Alaska, Navy Lt. Michael Nielsen, flight surgeon, Medium Marine Helicopter Squadron 161, was named the 2003 U.S. Navy Flight Surgeon of the Year and Navy Lt. Ken Moses, flight surgeon, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232, was awarded the 2003 U.S. Navy Aeromedical Teamwork award.

"It's an incredible honor to receive the (Lanier "Sonny" Carter Award)," said Moses, a native of Salt Lake City. "I'm very humbled. To receive the 'Sonny' Carter award named after someone as outstanding as him really hits home for me and makes me appreciate the bond I share with the Marines in my squadron even more."

Affectionately known as the "family doc," the U.S. Naval Academy graduate said his close interaction with the squadron at sea on ship helped him practice a variety of medicine and develop a strong sense of teamwork more than anything else.

"I have been in the Marine Corps for over 18 years and have served in five different F/A-18 squadrons from Hawaii to Beaufort, and Doc Moses is the best flight surgeon I have ever observed," said Lt. Col. Robert J. Charette, commanding officer, VMFA-232. "Doc Moses has demonstrated a true concern for the welfare of all our Marines that goes



Navy Lt. Michael Nielsen (far left) is presented with the 2003 U.S. Navy Flight Surgeon of the Year Award alongside Navy Lt. Ken Moses (far right), flight surgeon, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323, who was presented with the 2003 U.S. Navy Aeromedical Teamwork Award by Adm. Donald Arthur (left), head of the U.S. Navy Medical Corps, and Lt. Col. Michael Hudson (right), executive officer, Marine Aircraft Group 39, in Anchorage, Alaska, May 4. Photo courtesy of Lt. Michael Nielsen

above and beyond what is expected or required."

The Marines of VMFA-232 see Moses for everything, even counseling issues, and he said he has built close relationships.

"They trust me for everything, which helps me build a high standard of quality medical management," said Moses. "It's hard for me to imagine not being around the Marines for the rest of my life. I'm their doc."

Equally humbled with his award, Nielsen spent much of the past year deployed and conducting operational emergency medicine. He also has been an integral part of an ad-

vanced program designed to better train Navy corpsmen to successfully manage "golden hour" casualty evacuations in a hostile environment like Iraq.

Nielsen's efforts to help develop the new ongoing program for corpsmen to get hands-on field training stood out and earned him the praise of his superiors and the respect of his fellow Marines and Sailors in Iraq.

"In Iraq we participated in many CASEVAC operations, and it's not an easy thing to put an IV in a wounded Marine's body in a moving helicopter," said the Gaithersburg, Md., native. "On board the(USS) Tarawa I mentored more than 70 corpsmen during routine sick call and emergency care, but when we were in Al Taqqadum flying CASEVAC missions we learned valuable lessons on how to deal with wounds and medical issues that you just don't see back here. Stabilizing someone by clearing airways, bandaging knife and gunshot wounds or administering advanced trauma life support are things that corpsmen and myself as a flight surgeon must master in order to save lives on the front line."

Nielsen, who has also practiced trauma medicine in a civilian emergency room at a hospital in Los Angeles and was recently promoted to Marine Aircraft Group 16 flight surgeon, made a lasting impression while serving with the fleet and the Marines of HMM-161.

"Lieutenant Nielsen is a dedicated and multi-talented Naval officer who has contributed and accomplished more in one year than any flight surgeon I have encountered," said Lt. Col. David W. Coffman, commanding officer, HMM-161. "He is exceptionally physically fit with exceptional military bearing and is a very positive role model. His performance is of the highest caliber, so he's very deserving of this award."

New independent Iraqi newspaper hits stands

Voice of the Euphrates to teach meaning of democracy

Story by Staff Sgt. A.C. Mink

MAG-16 Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD-Ammar Aloba Idi of Jooba, and Sevan Lousinian, Department of Defense Arabic translator, presented the pilot edition of The Voice of the Euphrates, the first independent newspaper for the local region, to Maj. Gen. James F. Amos, commanding general, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, here May 13.

"For 35 years, Saddam teach people, in school and television, to deal with United States as enemy," said Aloba Idi. "This will take a lot of time - to change people's mind.

"We want to teach the people to read the newspaper, to know what happens in the world, what happens in Iraq, for themselves," added Aloba Idi, who holds a degree not in journalism, but in civil engineering. "Teach them the meaning of democracy."

Col. G.I. Wilson, ground operations officer, fusion cell, 3rd MAW, and Col. Michael A. Thorsby, officer in charge, air base staff and military mayor of Al Asad Air base, representing units who supported the project, were on hand for the presentation, along with numerous Iraqi businessmen and

Marines.

"This is incredible. What a great way to tell Iraqi people why the Marines are here," said Amos, accepting the newspaper copy. "I am going to take this paper back to the states."

Having a newspaper is the "hallmark of a free society," said Col. Jon M. Davis, aviation operations officer, fusion cell, 3rd MAW, when he saw the premiere edition.

Aloba Idi, founder and editor-in-chief of The

Ammar Aloba Idi

"We want to teach the people to read the newspaper, to know what happens in the world, what happens in Iraq, for themselves."

Voice, is the son of a local sheik and has been interested in the project since February, when he was approached by Lousinian

According to Master Gunnery Sgt. H. Joseph Wright, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, air base staff, and deputy mayor, the idea for the newspaper and the newspaper's inception is credited to Lousinian, who grew up in Iraq, and moved to the United States at the age of 12.

Lousinian, feeling the pull of his roots in both countries, brought Thorsby on board, who embraced the project "with all the voracity of a dog with a bone," said Wright.

See **NEWSPAPER**, page 8

Think about it ...

Local mom recounts act of kindness

Commentary by Heather Sperry

I do love my Marine. I love being a Marine wife. One of the simplest pleasures that we as wives have is to make our husband's day by sending him a care package.

As I packaged up the things my husband needed (and a few things he didn't), I was imagining what it must be like when the guys have mail call over in the sandbox.

In my mind I often see images of them, acting like children on Christmas Day, when their curiosities are satisfied and they get the adrenaline rush of discovering what is in those packages they have been waiting on.

I was making my way to the doors of the post office on base last Friday, package and my 1-year-old son in tow (the weight of each was between 20 and 25 pounds). I was balancing my son on my left hip, with the package so delicately and thoughtfully put together in my right arm.

See **KINDNESS**, page 8

POW/MIAs help define Memorial Day

Commentary by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The Prisoner of War/Missing in Action symbol is difficult to go unnoticed for someone like me, especially during holiday periods like Memorial Day.

Ever since I was a sophomore in college I have worn a POW/MIA bracelet. The first one was in memory of a Marine, 1st Lt. Ronald James Janousek, who was lost August 9, 1969, when the UH-1E Huey he was in went down over Laos. His body, along with that of fellow Marine Cpl. Bruce Kane, was never found.

After fumbling through a bin of red, blue, silver and gold engraved bracelets being sold by an organization raising funds for families of Vietnam POWs and MIAs, I found Janousek, born July 21, 1945, was from Posen, Ill. I suppose I chose, whether subconsciously or not, to wear a red bracelet for him over others because he was from my home state and was a Leo, like me.

The bracelets are also a way to foster overall public awareness of the fact that many Americans, from all services, have never returned home from the conflicts that they fought and more than likely died in to secure our freedoms and liberties.

I can testify to their effectiveness. Even as I wear the bracelet for another fallen Vietnam veteran, Army Staff Sgt. Raymond George Czerwicz (I eventually left the one for Janousek at "the Wall" in Washington), seldom does a week go by when someone does not ask me what it's for. I also became active in spreading awareness of POW/MIA issues, even researching the liberation and repatriation of American POWs from German camps by the Soviet Red Army during World War II for my later master's thesis project.

See **MEMORIAL**, page 9

Send your letters or opinions to the Flight Jacket editor. Include your name, rank and unit, and send to: mcmeence@miramar.usmc.mil.

Harrier squadrons bring fixed-wing attack to Iraq

Story by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

MAG-16 Combat Correspondent

ALASAD, Iraq - Marine Attack Squadrons 542 and 214, Marine Aircraft Group 16, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, arrived here in the mid-afternoon hours and throughout the night of May 18 to augment I Marine Expeditionary Force missions throughout western Iraq.

VMA-542, nicknamed the "Tigers," departed Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, N.C., about a week before arriving in Iraq. As the "Tigers" lifted off for Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Marines of VMA-214, nicknamed the "Black Sheep," were leaving Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., to do the same.

The attack squadrons will assist Marine light attack helicopter squadrons already in theater with close-air support for ground troops who need the aerial firepower that these planes can provide. This support for the troops is the number one mission of the AV-8B Harrier II and is the first priority to the squadrons, claimed Capt. Phil B. Kendro, Harrier pilot and adjutant, VMA-214.

"We want to help out," Kendro said. "It is our duty to help our fellow Marines out here."

One of Kendro's counterparts from the "Tigers" agreed wholeheartedly with his assessment of the Harriers' purpose in Iraq.

"In the Marine air community, we focus on being 'air to mud' warriors by supporting the troops on the ground," said Capt. Christian D. Rizzo, Harrier pilot, VMA-542. "It all revolves around support of the Marines on the ground."

Both squadrons deployed to Iraq last year, and after a short rest period, came back for another round. The families weren't happy but were understanding of this deployment, Kendro said.

"I don't think the families were excited, but they know that this is what we signed up for and what our job is," he said. "They understand that our fellow Marines are over here and that we needed to come help them and bring everyone home."

Rizzo noted that time for preparation was short for the squadron this time, but past experience has helped immeasurably.

"It was a fast deployment and everything happened very quickly," he explained. "We were very prepared for this; we worked hard before we came here. Everyone did a good job getting themselves and the squadron ready to go."

The attack squadrons have a difficult mission



Two AV-8B Harrier II jets taxi down a runway aboard Al Asad, Iraq. The pilots and the jets belong to Marine Attack Squadron 542, which arrived in country May 18. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte



Maj. Gen. James F. Amos (right), 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing commanding general, greets Capt. Wynn D. Hodgins, AV-8B Harrier II pilot, Marine Attack Squadron 542, upon the squadron's arrival at Al Asad, Iraq. Photo by Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte

ahead of them, so safety is paramount for the Marines when performing their mission, remarked Rizzo.

"It's a very enthusiastic crowd," he said. "We're excited to be able to work and do our jobs. However, we'll have to be very careful when employing our weapons."

"If in an effort to protect our troops you have to endanger them, you're not doing your job," he added. "We protect troops and protect life. We'll have to be surgical, and it will be challenging."

As challenging as the future may look for the squadrons that are joining the fight to win the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people, the Harriers' part of the mission is to bring the fight to the enemy, Rizzo said. There is no better way to do this than to add the Harrier squadrons into the mix of Marines already here, he added.

"When you get the Marine on the ground and the Marine in the air working together, it is absolutely devastating to the enemy," he concluded.

Air station supports Corps' recruiting effort

Story by Sgt. W.A. Napper Jr.

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

The war on terror is not the only campaign of importance fought day in and day out in the Marine Corps.

Each day hundreds of Marines fight for the Corps while embodying the core values honor, courage and commitment. Several times each month, air station personnel and equipment assist in this fight.

The fight is recruiting, and each month Marine recruiters nationwide fight to enlist quality candidates. It's working so far -- the Marine Corps has made mission, filling both recruit depots with fresh, able-bodied recruits who hope to pass the test and earn the title of Marine.

Every Marine is a walking billboard; his every action evaluated and emulated by complete strangers. When a Marine helps in the local community they are projecting an image of what it means to be a Marine. Each time a Marine takes an extra moment to go out of their way to help a stranger if life has been touched, and they will always remember that a Marine was there in their time of need.

An Educator's Workshop was held May 13 here, for educators and principals from the Recruiting Stations Orange, Calif., and Salt Lake City regions so they could get a taste of what it means to truly be a United States Marine. During the workshop the educators were given a brief about Marine aviation, had a question and answer session with a panel of Marines, a wind-



Gunnery Sgt. Allen M. Young, drill instructor, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, demonstrates a drill instructor's role to a bus full of teachers, principals and counselors during an Educator's Workshop tour. Photo by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

shield tour of the flightline and had the opportunity to have a hands-on experience in a CH-53 and F/A-18 static display. The recruiters from their prospective areas also attended the workshop and said it is experiences like these that really help out the Marine Corps' recruiting efforts.

"The biggest challenge for us as recruiters is exposure about the Marine Corps to the civilian population," said 30-year-old Staff Sgt. Darrell Baranowski, recruiter, RS Salt Lake

City. "These Educator's Workshops help out a lot. We show them a whole lot in a few days, but at least they walk away with a better understanding of what the Marine Corps is and what we do."

Fellow Recruiter 36-year-old Staff Sgt. Kenneth Toves, RS Salt Lake City, agreed with Baranowski that the Educator's Workshops play a vital role in the fight for recruits.

"I'd say half of these educators were skeptical about recommending military service to

their students," he said. "Now they understand it's not all drill instructors yelling. We try to show as much as we can, but I think we need even more educators than what we bring out here."

The weeklong workshop not only highlights the air station, but also Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego as well as Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. Miramar also supports the recruiting effort through its "hands across the fences" policy. One way that policy is used is by providing Marine color guards for civilian events. Sgt. Dexter Williford, color sergeant, Marine Corps Air Bases Western Area, recognizes the important role the color guard plays in showing the surrounding communities what the Marine Corps is all about.

"I have two color guard teams, a tall team which is all males, and a shorter team which has females," said the Bainbridge, Ga., native. "I like using the shorter team at events because it gives the females the opportunity to be seen. Civilians normally don't see a female handle a weapon sharply during the manual of arms. Some of them don't even realize it's possible for a woman to do that."

Williford said often after events the Marines will talk with attendees and sometimes get asked to have their pictures taken.

"They ask about everything, and we tell them," he said. "They ask how our wives feel, and where we've deployed to. It's great. It's a conduit for them to see what we do."

At the end of the day, Williford said he's just trying to get the Marine Corps image seen.

War stories sought from Iraq veterans

Story by Cpl. Paul Leicht

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

Many of the world's authors of fiction and non-fiction—from Sophocles to Hemingway to Michael Durant, recent author of "In the Company of Heroes"—were once soldiers in military service. Their sometimes personalized

reminisces and stories based on wartime experiences are crucial ingredients in shaping culture.

Even in this complex, technological age of easily deleted or lost e-mails, Marines and their fellow servicemembers are taking the time to reflect on their recent experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan to help tell the uniquely American story.

But unfortunately, not enough are picking up the pen or sitting down in front of the keyboard to tell their tales.

In response, a new government program under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Arts, Operation Homecoming, is underway to help troops returning home and their immediate families to write about wartime experiences in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Operation Homecoming will preserve personal accounts of the wartime experiences of our troops and their loved ones," said Dana Gioia, chairman, NEA, in a recent press release. "Some of these writings will focus on a singularly challenging moment in life, while others may provide vivid accounts of historical events that rise to the occasion of literature. American letters will be richer for their addition."

Iraqi translator bridges language gap

Story by Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III

MWHS-3 Combat Correspondent

AL ASAD, Iraq - Language can form barriers that are complicated to overcome, and in a situation where one must be able to designate friend from foe, knowing the local dialect can save your life.

Most American servicemembers serving in Iraq do not speak Arabic; much less the Iraqi dialect of the language, which posed a serious problem when interaction between Iraqi civilians and the military began.

One Iraqi-born interpreter, first working for the Army and now for the Marine Corps, has been in Iraq for more than one year and feels he has played a major role in breaking through the language barrier for servicemembers.

"I was the first interpreter to enter (Al Asad) for the (Department of Defense)," said Sevan Lousinian, DoD interpreter, air base staff. "There were interpreters amongst the soldiers, but none officially."

Lousinian was not alone in his endeavor because the military sent more than one interpreter into the country, but he will be the first to complete his "tour of duty."

"We came as two people, my friend (and) roommate came with me," added the 42-year-old Baghdad, Iraq, native, and 24-year resident of Pasadena, Calif. "He left after four or five weeks because he found it too hard to live here."

After living in Iraq for only 12 years, Lousinian made a couple stops before coming to the U.S.

"I lived in Cyprus for one year and then went to London where I graduated high school," he said.

Now having returned to his native land, Lousinian has made a vow to help the United States, the country that has allowed him to live the



Sevan Lousinian (left) interprets for Ammar Aloba Idi, a local vendor conducting business aboard Al Asad, Iraq. Lousinian, a 42-year-old Baghdad native, has called Pasadena, Calif., home for more than 24 years. Photo by Staff Sgt. A.C. Mink

majority of his life as a free man.

"I was born in Iraq and left at a very young age," he said. "The last 24 years of my life have been spent in the United States. The (United States) opened doors for me. I went to school there, got married there and had my first child there."

When the conflict between the U.S. and Iraq began, Lousinian said he witnessed on television what types of problems America was facing and knew of only one way to help.

"I saw a couple of clips from the news during the early days of the war," he commented. "We saw the soldiers struggling to communicate with locals, and the locals were struggling to communicate with the soldiers."

"I got together with a few friends of mine and we decided to get involved and help. It was a pay-back for the United States and everything it has done for us," he added.



A Miramar Marine at the station library reviews selections from the Commandant's Reading List. It includes several works written by veterans based on wartime experiences, such as "We Were Soldiers Once ... and Young," co-authored by retired Army Lt. Gen. Harold G. Moore and Joseph L. Galloway. Photo by Cpl. Jeff Zaccaro

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Miramar Health Fair is a hearty success

From Tug-of-War to Cadence competitions, fair offered a little something for everyone

Story by Lance Cpl. Skye Jones

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent

If somebody is “in the pink,” they are healthy, strong and in overall dazzling physical shape. The 2004 Health Fair’s main goal was to get servicemembers into this stylish color, figuratively.

The Health Fair took place at the Miramar Sports Complex here May 20, which commenced the 101 Days of Summer Challenge.

Besides competitions, classes and other events, the fair featured a multitude of booths where servicemembers could learn about health and fitness. Participants also had the opportunity to have their blood pressure checked, get free health screenings and give blood. There were also sports massage therapists available to relieve some undue stress. Many booths gave away free samples such as multivitamins, power bars, calcium chews and plenty of healthy foods.

“The Health Fair is a real morale booster. It’s all about Esprit De Corps,” said Lynn Sanchez, Marine Corps Community Services Health Promotion director.



Monique Beauchamp (front) and Vera Dutkiewicz, two participants in the Spinning Class, warm up prior to the actual instructional period. The event was just one of many in the 2004 Health Fair festivities. Vendors also offered patrons everything from healthy food to health advice. Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen

“The fair keeps health in the front of the Marines minds. Sometimes they think that they are indestructible, but this helps remind them of these things,” continued the Berea, Ohio, native.

Semper Fit Director Anne H. Panattoni



Cpl. Antonio Barletta, an aircraft electronic systems technician with Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron 16, does his part in the Four-person Push Ups Competition. The MALS-16 team, The Four Runners, finished third overall. Photo by Staff Sgt. Chad McMeen

said Marine Corps Community Services have been planning the event all year.

“Every year we try to make the fair better from the last,” added the San Diego native. “The main purpose is to provide servicemembers with an overall better awareness of health. It teaches them to make good, healthy choices.”

Maj. Gen. Jon A. Gallinetti started the event off with a motivating speech to encourage the Marines participating in the competitions.

“This Health Fair is the official kick off for the 101 days of summer, which promises to be very productive. I challenge you to do your very best. I support and wish all of you the best of luck,” said the Fresno, Calif., native.

The first event to kick off the fair was the tug of war competition where Marines chanted, “pull, pull, pull!” Various squadrons competed at the chance to take home the glory.

“This competition is all about coming together as a team,” stated Gunnery Sgt. Thomas J. Black, Maintenance Administrative Division chief, Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 and Kansas City, Mo., native. “Some Marines from our squadron couldn’t make it out here today, but we will adapt and overcome.”

There were several other competitions

hosted throughout the day as well, including a cadence competition where drill instructors from Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego came out to judge each squadron. There were also rock climbing and four-person push-up competitions.

Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101 Sergeant Major Sgt. Maj. Raul H. Tena said, “The competitions are morally, physically and spiritually healthy.” The Los Angeles native added, “It’s great to see everyone working as a team.”

After competing, servicemembers could take part in classes like cycling or participate in events like the “dunk your sergeant major” where Marines could purchase three softballs for a chance to drench their leaders.

“It’s a piece of cake. I don’t plan on getting drenched,” said “dunkee” volunteer Capt. Kevin R. Williams, rear officer-in-charge, Marine Wing Communications Squadron 38. “It’s a good way to help Marines and families raise money, and it gives them an opportunity to vent their frustrations in a positive way.”

“The Marine Corps doesn’t teach us all about health. We know we have to watch what we eat and exercise. But a lot of us don’t know the specifics like calorie counting. The fair provides a lot of that information,” said Black.

Top finishers in this year’s competitions



Rock Wall Climbing:

1st - VMFAT-101
2nd - MALS-16
3rd - HMM-462

Four-Person Push Ups:

1st - VMFAT-101
2nd - MALS-11
3rd - MALS-11

Tug-of-War:

1st - MALS-11
2nd - VMFAT-101
3rd - MALS-16

Cadence:

1st - MALS-11
2nd - MALS-11
3rd - MALS-11

Cobra, Huey crews keep helicopters ready for war

HMLA-775 pilots praise air crew for their superior performance in ‘austere conditions’

Story by Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi

I Marine Expeditionary Force

CAMP TAQADDUM, Iraq - The afternoon sun poured down all of its 100 degrees on the reservists with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 775 at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq, while they maintained their Ah-1W Super Cobra and UH-1N Huey helicopters.

Since augmenting Marine Aircraft Group 16 in theater earlier this year, the squadron has been heavily engaged supporting Marine infantry units with close air support in Fallujah and Ar Ramadi, as well as conducting security escorts for convoys.

“(The helicopters) are intimidation,” said Cpl. Matthew A. Wright, a native of Niles, Mich., who has seen the helicopters in action from the ground up while on convoys with I Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group motor transportation. “If I was the enemy on the ground, they would definitely put the fear in me.”

Behind each of these missions, whether CAS or convoy escorts, the Marines on the ground who maintain the helicopters have set the stage for the pilots and crew chiefs to perform.

“I can’t say enough good things about them,” said Maj. Erik Douglas, a Cobra pilot with the squadron from Oceanside, Calif. “They continue to perform remarkably in austere conditions.”

As Cobras return from missions, the Marines run backwards facing the gunship to direct the pilots into their parking spaces.

“We have to be quick on our feet,” said Lance Cpl. Christopher L. Eiben, a plane captain with the squadron from Huntington Beach, Calif. “We’ve got a lot of things going on at the same time, planes coming in, going out and refueling - you’ve got to stay sharp.”

Eiben explained his job as a plane captain simply means he’s in charge of keeping the “bird” ready to fly. He certifies to the pilots, before they take-off, that the helo is mission capable.

“The job has got its ups and downs,” said Eiben, “but when you see the birds come back in one piece, it makes it all worthwhile.”

“We wouldn’t be out here without

them,” said Douglas, who is a biology teacher at Oceanside High School as a civilian. “We wouldn’t be able to complete our mission.”

Eiben added the pilots and the maintenance Marines have to have a good relationship with each other - faith and trust is paramount between the two aspects of a squadron.

“We’ve all started off on the ground learning how the planes operate and how to fix them,” said Staff Sgt. Mark J. Covill, a

crew chief with the squadron. “After you work on them so long, it’s only natural to want to get up in one.”

This is exactly what Pfc. Daniel S. Boatright aspires to accomplish from his experiences as a mechanic, but on the civilian side. The 2003 Martin Luther King Jr. High School graduate from Riverside, Calif., wants to be a pilot.

And what better way to get started than by learning how a plane operates, said Boatright, who’s completing his first deploy-

ment in the Corps.

“I’ve never even been on a drill,” he said. “I joined the unit, and within two weeks I was leaving for Iraq to do my new job.”

Boatright plans on attending California Baptist University in Riverside when he returns home with his squadron after they complete their one-year activation in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Because of their exceptional work ethic,” Douglas said, “the aircrafts continually make the flight schedule.”



Lance Cpl. Joseph Mixer, a crew chief with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 775 and native of State College, Pa., performs maintenance on a UH-1 Huey at Camp Taqaddum, Iraq, April 29. *Photo by Cpl. Matthew J. Apprendi*

Young, old alike flock to opening of Shrek 2

Review by Sgt. Kristen L. Tull

MCAS Miramar Combat Correspondent



Shrek 2, the follow up to the original smash hit which premiered in 2001, tells how Shrek (voive of Michael Myers) and Princess Fiona (voice of Cameron Diaz), newly married and honeymooning in Hansel's Honeymoon Hideaway gingerbread house, fight for acceptance.

With an all star cast of characters including the voices of Eddie Murphy (as the Donkey), Antonio Banderas (as Puss in Boots), John Cleese (as Fiona's father, King Harold), Julie Andrews (as Fiona's mother, Queen Lillian), Rupert Everett (as Prince Charming) and Jennifer Saunders (as the Fairy Godmother), this film is packed with hilarious, spoof-filled obstacles.

Fiona, the princess of Far Far Away, wants nothing more than to live happily ever after with her "prince" Shrek. Her parents, especially her father along and supposed Fairy Godmother, have their minds set on breaking up the newly-weds so Fiona can marry a human prince charming.

Many of the same characters return, such as the annoying Donkey. The most fearsome, yet adorable, being the Puss



in Boots, really added a lot to the movie. Other fairy tale characters such as Pinocchio, the Three Little Pigs and the Three Blind Mice to name a few also appear throughout the movie, making it even more appealing to youngsters.

The Shrek novelty seems to have worn off a bit, but for a sequel, the movie exhibits the meaning of "beauty is on the inside" in a fun and entertaining way.

PRICES, continued from page 1

cheaper than stations out in town, so when gas prices go up we see an increase in business because people feel it is well worth it."

With less money going into the fuel tank, Miramar's gasoline customers will have a few extra consumer dollars for other spending needs.

"People with access to military installations have a great benefit here with gas prices what they are in the San Diego area," Pirano said. "The price out in town is more than \$2.30 in some places, so it makes us proud that we provide a cheaper, quality source of gasoline for our customers."

NEWSPAPER, continued from page 3

"Sevan told me this idea and I also find this idea is good," said Aloba Idi of Lousinian.

Together, Lousinian and Aloba Idi enlisted the help of Lt. Col. Harold B. Kempfer, action officer, fusion cell, 3rd MAW. The group worked to solicit the assistance of other members of 3rd MAW and other units aboard the Air Base, specifically Combat Service Support Battalion 7, 1st Force Service Support Group and 2nd Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 7, 1st Marine Division, in getting the project off the ground.

The Mayor's cell continued to work on the project, conducting countless meetings to discuss a business plan, topics for columns and funding for the newspaper.

When it came time for the project to be brought to fruition, the group consulted with 2/7 as the paper was to be published and distributed within their area of operations.

After time to iron out the remaining issues, not the least of which was funding, the first edition of the fledgling paper was sent to Baghdad, Iraq, for printing, and the premiere edition came hot off the press May 7. "There is no censorship of the paper,"

SHAKE, continued from page 2

break. Either put the baby in the crib and go sit in another room or ask someone else to take over for a little while so that you can calm down and put things into perspective.

Please don't hesitate to ask for help if you feel like you are going to lose control. And a parent should always tell a caregiver that if they ever feel overwhelmed or frustrated when watching the baby, to phone you and you will come home right away.

The Marine Corps has many programs, classes and services available to enhance all parents' coping mechanisms. For details call 577-6585.

said Thorsby, whose office was instrumental in getting the paper off the ground. "This is history in the making."

Currently, the primary source of news and information for the local populace, many of whom rarely leave the local area for more westernized cities, such as Baghdad, is the Al Jazeera network and word of mouth, according to Lousinian.

"(The Marines) told me that I can write anything in the paper. 'If you want to write about something that is wrong that happens, you can write about it.' They told me," said Aloba Idi. "Even if is Marines or government - that is democracy."

Lousinian was excited about the project and the possible impact on the people in the area.

"Of course (the newspaper) will make a difference," said Lousinian, who was born in Baghdad in 1961, before his family moved to the United States in 1982. "This is the first (free enterprise newspaper) in (their) history. There are so many people in Iraq, from many and bring freedom for Iraqi people, (now helping) us rebuild Iraq. We can work together on this."

The paper is a weekly, released on Thursdays and is distributed in Baghdad and Jooba as well as here.

KINDNESS, continued from page 4

I walked up to the rear of the line and attempted to set the package on top of a receptacle located right inside the doorway.

I must have appeared to be having a hard time because the gentleman in front of me said, "You want some help with that?" I replied no, as in my nature, because I am stubborn and independent.

As I continued to attempt to get the package up there he took it and placed it thereupon. Again, the fateless thank you came from my lips.

As the line moved forward, slowly as it is known to do, the gentleman in front of me kept moving the package along between us, sliding it along the glass cabinet that is located in the lobby.

After awhile, it came to be his turn in line, and he picked up my package and took it to the counter.

I figured he was just taking it up there so I wouldn't have to struggle with it, so I patiently kept my place in line. He turned, smiled at me and said, "Come on up here."

I was reluctant at first, but did so anyway, wondering what he had up his sleeve. The worker behind the counter weighed his package. When asked if both packages

were going, I said, "No, this one is mine." The gentleman then said, "No, they are going together, I'm gonna get that for her."

He then turned to me and told me that my husband and me are doing more than he is doing right now.

It was as if for a split second time stood still as I searched for words to express my gratitude for his deed.

I could only stand there in awe, and when I came to my senses, I hugged him, blue eyes full of tears, and thanked him so much for what he had done. As we proceeded to walk out I stopped and asked him if I could have his name, so that when I told my husband of the deed he had done I could give a name.

He looked at me with smiling eyes and told me to simply call him Red, because everyone else does. "My wife stayed home and raised two while I served," he told me. We went our separate ways as we approached the parking lot, but I didn't see him. I stood there for a few moments eager to try and at least get a tag number so maybe I could track him down and write a thank you.

I never saw him again. It was as if he disappeared. So Red, if this gets to you and you read it, please know that I will never forget the act of kindness shown to me that day. Mama always said there were angels among us, perhaps that day I found mine.

Iraq desert no obstacle for frozen dessert

Story by Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.

MWHS-3 Combat Correspondent

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq - Far removed from the everyday comforts of home, the Marines and Sailors of Marine Wing Support Squadron 374, Marine Wing Support Group 37, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing serving at distant outposts here were treated to the ultimate delight recently when a variety of ice cream was delivered to their collective doorsteps.

Dubbed "Operation 31 Flavors" by 3rd MAW commanding general, Maj. Gen. James F. Amos, the mission found life during a visit with Capt. Valerie L. Hodgson, Korean Village detachment officer-in-charge, MWSS-374.

"('Operation 31 Flavors') came about during a trip I took to Korean Village a little more than a month ago," the general explained. "I was talking to the Marines and asking them how things were going, so I could get a read on if they were happy or if there was anything they needed. After talking with them, to be honest, I didn't get a single Marine who said anything negative."

Ever persistent, Amos added that he asked Hodgson numerous times during his visit if there was anything her detachment needed, which she repeatedly declined. Finally, as he prepared to board his flight back to the 3rd MAW command post, the general's question hit bull's-eye.

"She looked at me and said, 'Sir, send us some ice cream,'" Amos recalled. "I said, 'Captain Hodgson, you've got it. You're talking to the right man.'"

According to Hodgson, a 35-year-old Anaheim, Calif., native, the time frame in which the frozen delicacy arrived was surprisingly swift.



The Marines of Marine Wing Support Squadron 374 disembark a shipment of ice cream in Korean Village, Iraq, May 22. Photo by Staff Sgt. Houston F. White Jr.

"When the general came out here, it was early in spring and I figured it would take him a good long time to resolve any logistical hurdles with getting it here," she said.

"I knew that ice cream would be a huge morale boost in the heat of the summer, so I figured that by the time it got here, it would be summertime and the ice cream would arrive just in time. I did not expect to get the ice cream here as quickly as it did," she added.

The operation was divided into three phases and in addition to speed, it called for massive coordination, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Samuel F. Pamoleras, food services officer, 3rd MAW.

"We used resources that we have in Kuwait to make this happen," he said. "We negotiated with the public warehousing company down there and received a total of 10 pallets of ice cream, with 80 containers each.

"We were able to get it palletized, put on dry ice, get it

shipped to Al Asad, (Iraq) and put it into cold storage within a matter of a few days," added the 34-year-old San Diego native.

"From there, we had to figure out which aviation assets we were going to use so that we could have a quick turnaround and the ice cream would be received on the other end in a timely fashion."

The "other end" comprised of the three outlying areas of Iraq known as Mudyasis, Korean Village, and Al Qaim; each containing personnel who knew very little, if anything, about the special deliveries they were soon to receive.

Once the unexpected treat was distributed during evening chow however, the Marines and Sailors of MWSS-374 seemed both shocked and thrilled.

"This is pretty nice from where I'm sitting," commented Lance Cpl. Justin H. Hastings, automotive mechanic, MWSS-374 and 23-year-old Portland, Ore., native. "We haven't had anything like this out here before."

"The ice cream I just ate was wonderful," offered Pfc. Dustin M. Hawkins, motor transportation operator, MWSS-374 and 19-year-old Houston native. "After a hard day's work, any food is good, but this is awesome."

"I think it makes the troops and (noncommissioned officers) feel good about what we're doing out here," added Cpl. Michael D. Rice, nuclear, chemical and biological specialist, MWSS-374.

"It shows that our leaders have actually seen a difference in what we've done out here, so they're rewarding us with the ice cream," said the 22-year-old from Indianapolis.

"(Our leaders are) definitely paying attention," agreed Hodgson. "Being in a remote area, I think it's easy for people to forget about us, but clearly they did not because they worked so hard to get this ice cream out to us. Having ice cream out here is a reward for the hard work that the

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MEMORIAL, continued from page 4

POW/MIAs can be remembered and honored in other ways—one of which I caught a glimpse of out of the corner of my eye while delivering the Flight Jacket last week.

Just outside the door to the office of Master Chief Mario Surla, command master chief, Naval Consolidated Brig, sits a peacefully silent POW/MIA presentation table.

"The table is a way we symbolize the fact that members of our military are still missing," said Surla. "Last year around the time of POW/MIA Day I was listening to Senator John McCain on television and it got me thinking about the whole issue and influenced me to set up the table. I sent out solicitations to help set the table, and over time people kept adding things to it and keeping it immaculate. I was surprised just how much it motivated people and how much people cared."

The presentation table, like the military, is replete with symbolism. Set for one, it symbolizes the frailty of one against oppressors. It is bedecked with flags, covers and military police badges from all five of America's branches of service, as well as a Bible opened to several passages of Psalms.

The tablecloth is white, to symbolize the purity of servicemembers intentions behind the call to arms for their country. There is also a vase with a perfect rose to represent the families and loved ones of the com-



Miramar's Naval Consolidated Brig is home to a POW/MIA Presentation Table in remembrance and honor of those servicemembers held captive by the enemy or never returned home. The idea for the table, which was installed in 2003, was inspired by NCBM Command Master Chief Mario Surla. Photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht

rades-in-arms who kept the faith while awaiting their return. Tied to the vase is a red ribbon to remind us to demand a proper accounting of the missing.

Upon a small porcelain dish next to a conspicuously bare dinner plate is a slice of lemon that symbolizes the bitter fate all POW/MIAs share, while the salt is symbolic of the tears shed by their families. Since the missing cannot share a toast with us, the glass is inverted and the chair is empty—because they are not here.

"Memorial Day is a time to look back at those who made the ultimate sacrifice, who never came home to their loved ones and brothers-in-arms," said Surla, a native of the Philippines, who first joined the Navy in 1975 serving as a corpsman with 2nd battalion, 4th Marine Regiment. "Our patriotism can sometimes be amplified by current events, but for me (POW/MIAs) have always been my heroes."

Chapel weekly schedule of events

Holy Family Catholic Community

- ◆ Mass: 11 a.m. Sunday, 11:30 a.m. weekdays.
- ◆ Rosary: 10:30 a.m. Sunday.
- ◆ Confession: 10:15 a.m. Sunday or for appointments call Father Berchmanz at 577-1333.
- ◆ Religious classes for children for first communion, confirmation: 9:30-10:45 a.m. Sunday.
- ◆ Youth gathering and planning following mass Sunday.
- ◆ Baptism: Normally the first Sunday of the month. Call the chaplain's office for details.
- ◆ Marriage: Call the chaplain for details at least six months before wedding.
- ◆ Instruction in the Catholic faith (RCIA). Call the chaplain's office for details.
- ◆ Scripture Class: 7 p.m. Wednesday in the Chapel classroom.
- ◆ Choir Practice: 6 p.m. Wednesday in the Main Chapel.

Liturgical Christian

- ◆ Sunday: Choir rehearsal at 9 a.m.
Liturgical worship at 9:30 a.m.
Adult/Youth/Children bible study at 10:45 a.m.
- ◆ Tuesday: Morning prayer group (Room 4) at 6 a.m.
Contemporary Gospel Service at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday: Crafts and conversation at 9 a.m. Free childcare provided.
Women's bible study at 10:45 a.m.
Baptist service at 7 p.m.
- ◆ Thursday: Liturgical choir rehearsal at 7:30 p.m.
- ◆ Friday: Baptist bible study at 7 p.m.

Jewish

- ◆ First Friday of the month at MCRD San Diego at 7 p.m.
- ◆ Last Friday of the month in Edson Range Chapel Camp Pendleton at 7:30 p.m.

For more information during work hours call the Chaplain's Office at 577-1333 or the command duty officer after hours at 577-1141.

Miramar Biathlon

A biathlon will be held June 5 at 8:05 a.m. for individual or two member teams.

Like other biathlons, this one will feature a 5-mile run and a 400-meter swim.

The run will start at the base theater, and the swim will be conducted at the 50-meter training pool.

The biathlon will be split into three categories; open, senior (35 and up) and female, for both the individual and team divisions.

Fees will be \$15 for active duty, \$20 for all others. The event will count toward the

Semper Fit 101 Days of Summer points challenge.

For more information or to register stop by the Athletic Office in the Miramar Sports Complex Facility or call 577-4127 or 577-7700.

Soccer tournament

Marine Corps Community Services will hold a 6-on-6 soccer tournament June 7-11 at the Mills Park Soccer Fields.

Games will begin at 11:15 a.m. and will end by 1 p.m. Sign-up sheets can be dropped off at the Great Escape in building 5509 un-



Miramar Station Theater

closed for renovations

The Miramar Station Auditorium/Movie Theater is scheduled to re-open its doors this summer following the completion of renovations. Station patrons can expect a grand opening celebration mid-June.

Renovations include new carpeting, tile and seating, as well as installation of an air conditioning and heating system, a fire safety system and a new roof.

til June 2 at 5 p.m.

First, second and third place prizes will be awarded.

For more information contact Alisa Hertzler at 577-6283.

Voting season

The 2004 election season is near.

If you are in the military and are going to be overseas and wish to vote absentee there are special provisions for you to register and receive an overseas absentee ballot.

To do this you need to request a complete a Federal Post Card Registration and Absentee Ballot Request by Aug. 15 and mail it to your local county elections official by Oct. 11 if you are stateside, Oct. 15 if you are deployed overseas.

You can use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot if you do not receive your absentee ballot while overseas.

AA meetings

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are now being offered at the Marine Corps Community Services Counseling Center in building 2247.

The classes are offered every weekday from 6:30-7:30 p.m. and offer problem drinkers a place to join an open discussion with people of the same concern.

All active duty personnel, family members, military retirees and Department of Defense employees can participate in the

meetings.

For more information call 577-7285.

Flight Jacket survey

The Flight Jacket is currently holding a reader survey to better serve our readers. The survey will allow readers to express what they would like to see more or less of in the paper, delivery options and other areas of concern.

The survey can be taken online at http://www.miramar.usmc.mil/miramar/pao_fjsurvey.htm.

It can also be accessed through the hyperlink under the online version of the Flight Jacket at <http://www.miramar.usmc.mil>. A paper copy is also available at the Public Affairs Office in building 2257. For more information call the Public Affairs Office at 577-6000.

Naval essay contest

Essays are now being accepted for the annual Naval Intelligence Essay Contest.

The contest is sponsored by the Naval Institute, the Naval Intelligence Foundation and the Naval Intelligence Professionals.

The contest is open to anyone, and the winner will be awarded \$1,000 and have their essay published in the February issue of Proceedings magazine.

Essays should be no more than 3,500 words and can be on any subject pertaining to Naval intelligence or intelligence support of naval or maritime forces.

For more information log on to the official Naval Institute Web site at <http://www.navalinstitute.org>

Parenting Plus

The New Parent Support Program will hold a Parenting Plus class June 30 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Counseling Center in building 2274.

This month's topic will be "Surviving the Summer with your Kids." Lunch will be provided and childcare reimbursement is available with advance notice.

For more information call 577-9812.



**For information on
deployed 3rd MAW Marines
and Sailors, call the
Dictaphone at
1-877-616-8762.
For more information, call
577-7397/7294.**

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The program will provide writing workshops led by veterans and many distinguished authors such as military writer Tom Clancy, Jeff Shaara, author of “Gods and Generals,” and Mark Bowden, author of “Blackhawk Down,” for servicemembers at various military installations across the country and overseas, including Marine Corps Bases Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune, according to the NEA release.

The NEA is opening the call for submissions in a variety of forms, including fiction, verse, and letters to essay, memoir and personal journals related to recent military service, said Ann Puderbaugh, communications officer, NEA.

All program entries will be reviewed by the literary experts working with the program and the best examples will be published next year in an anthology that will be given to military installations, schools, libraries and sold in retail bookstores, the proceeds of which will go to various military charities, added Puderbaugh.

“As a part of Operation Homecoming our (servicemembers) will have the opportunity to write about some of their wartime experi-

ences in a manner that will be both therapeutic and creative,” said Charles S. Abell, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in the release. “By reflecting on and documenting their recent experiences, participants will gain new insights by working with a number of renowned authors, and in the process will be writing works of genuine historical value.”

For more information on Operation Homecoming visit www.operationhomecoming.org, or www.nea.gov.

TRANSLATOR,
continued from page 5

More recently, Lousinian has assisted with civil affairs missions by interpreting for the military mayor’s office here.

“He is instrumental in the success of this base,” said Col. Michael A. Thorsby, officer-in charge, air base staff, and military mayor here. “What makes him so unique is he was born in Iraq, raised in Baghdad and understands the people. He knows our intent and how to relay it to the locals.”

Thorsby’s opinion of Lousinian does not only stem from their professional relationship, but also from the way he views Lousinian outside of work.

“Everyone is comfortable with him,” added the 47-year-old Holland, Mich., native. “He is that guy that everyone is comfortable talking to locals or military.”

According to Master Gunnery Sgt. H. Joseph Wright, staff noncommissioned officer-in-charge, air base staff and deputy mayor, Lousinian is a very kind person and cares deeply for his roots here in Iraq.

“He has retained his cultural understanding of his people and has a real passion to see them succeed,” said the 51-year-old Berkley, Mich., native. “He can interpret the sheiks and local populous concerns. Anyone can translate a language, but he interprets what is being said.”

Thorsby added that Lousinian’s laudable abilities make him a valuable asset, and he will truly be missed following his imminent departure from his homeland.

“Because of Sevan’s linguistic and people skills, he has become the glue that holds everything together,” said Thorsby. “In my 20 years of experience in international purchasing, he is one of the two best interpreters I have ever worked with. I hate to see him go.”

Many of the locals who have come in contact with Lousinian feel he is an asset that helped give the locals a chance to be heard.

“I was very pleased and happy to find an Iraqi amongst the American military,” said Safa Tabet, a local vendor here. “It made us feel like we had a voice for the Iraqis.

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Marines and Sailors put in everyday.”

According to Lt. Col. David R. Leppelmeier, commanding officer, MWSS-374, reaching out to his Marines and Sailors in remote locations is something that is enjoyable for everyone involved.

“They know I care about them, and want to get out to see them more since they have a little tougher scenario than everyone else because of location. They get a kick out of seeing us and they really appreciated the general’s gesture with the ice cream,” said the 44-year-old native of Babylon, N.Y.

“There are two miracles in the desert we performed: One is ice and the other one is ice cream,” laughed the MWSS-374 commander.

“It really warms my heart to do something like this for our Marines and Sailors,” expressed Amos. “It’s only a small gesture, but just doing it brings a smile to my face.”